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yoke of France.—This topic of consolation, sir, I have also tried with my clients. But I have been again met with their plaguy account books and dry details of profit and loss. They tell me bluntly enough, "All these fine fancies are nothing to us if they do not give us back our American market, which has by the grand measures of government been taken away. We ask back our traffic,—our buying and selling, our livelihood. We are plain men—merchants, manufacturers, and workmen—and we care not if one half of Europe never heard of the British Navy, nor knew there was such a thing as ship—nay, nor knew there was such a country as England—provided that half were consuming our produce and wearing our manufactures. Let the British Navy and name be as unknown in the heart of Poland as it is in the deserts of Kamtschatka—but, for pity's sake, give us back that trade, the sole means of our subsistence—the sole object of our desires—the only thing our literal imaginations ever dream about."

"Sir, I greatly fear, that dull as it may be, you must give these men some other answer to their complaints than the lively and elegant ones which I have been alluding to. I strongly suspect you must, in order to satisfy the people, make out some case for the new measures which shall be adapted to the grovelling capacities of the nine hundred and ninety-nine plain matter of fact men who inhabit the country, whatever flighty things you may hear from the thousandth wit.—For unhappily our customers on the continent have fallen under the dominion of a matter of fact man, who works with stubborn tools, and won't suffer his vassals to rebel for the sake of a point. He does not rule them by the love of sugar and coffee, and indeed cares little whether the interesting peasants ever see such things or no. He does not leave them to form ideas of a French soldier, by raising the prices of goods, "in places where a soldier was never seen."—He chains them with chains, and drives them on with bayonets—and sends half a million of strong men to execute his orders—and having done so, he troubles himself but little what his vassals say about colonial produce—or what orders

you issue from your council, even if you should make them as intelligible as his own."

We trust that some of our readers will not be displeased with the length of these quotations. The subject is important, and we fear many treat it too lightly. As in similar cases, some may suppose that America is of no further importance, than to be made subservient to our selfish interests. The haughtiness and selfishness of Britain is a favourite theme on the continent of Europe, and turns the tide of popularity against us. Let us be wise in time. America may be conciliated, but cannot for any great length of time be bullied by us. In our humble capacities we wished to contribute our efforts to change the current of public opinion in favour of justice and sound policy. Popular feeling, properly directed and temperately urged, cannot fail to have some influence on the conduct of Government. In the beginning of the war with America, which ended in the independence of that country, the popular cry was in favour of coercion, and popular opinion differently directed, produced the peace of 1783. We have raised our voice against recurring again to coercive measures. Whether matters are already accommodated with America, or are in a train of being so speedily, it is difficult to ascertain; but even should a temporary accommodation take place, unless we cherish a spirit of peace towards them, no long time will elapse before mutual irritations may again arise. We trust, therefore, that our labour will not be lost, in thus having devoted so many of our pages to the attempt to promote a spirit of peace and reconciliation.

K.

The Cottagers of Glenburnie, a Tale for the Farmer's Inglenook. By Elizabeth Hamilton, 8vo, 1 vol. p.p. 408. Edinburgh, Ballantyne & Co., 1808.

TO review a book which has already passed through three large editions with universal approbation, may appear superfluous, yet several reasons induce us to undertake the task. Though the book in question be written purposely for the improvement of the Scotch peasantry, yet in

many points it will be found applicable to ourselves, and if it be again brought forward before the public eye for this purpose, and held up in this particular point of view, as a means of introducing a system of domestic economy among the lower classes in this country, the investigation of its merits, though but a repetition of the praises it has already so deservedly obtained, will not be without its use. It may be said that the manners of the peasantry here, bear no comparison with the high drawn picture now before us; and indeed, were a stranger whose mind had been prepossessed with stories of Irish filth and Irish laziness to travel into this country, for the purpose of verifying the truth of the character, if he were fortunate enough to enter the country at this extremity, sail up Carrickfergus bay, land in Belfast, and pursue the usual route of travellers through Lisburn, he would at once decide that the nation had been foully misrepresented, and wonder at the strange prejudice of foreigners, and the still stranger perversity of so many writers of this country who had dwelt on the unpleasing theme. But on proceeding further, it must be confessed that he would find too much reason to retract his over hasty opinion, he would see in many instances that the scenes of Glenburnie were but too faithfully represented in many parts of this kingdom. Let us not be accused of want of patriotism in making such an avowal. To see our own faults, and to endeavour to amend them, is real patriotism. Improvement is a nation's blessing; a blessing which can never be duly appreciated until we are conscious of our own wants. And for this reason the writer appears to me much more deserving of his country's thanks, who with the candour and courage of a true friend, points out its defects in hopes of applying a remedy, than he who by fanciful high drawn pictures, flatters it into a false sentiment of ideal superiority; or by incorrect representations of its ancient state, leads us to sigh after a return of those days of splendour, and to prefer a relapse into former barbarism to an

exertion at increased improvement. This leads us to confess that another reason for undertaking the present review was that after having expressed ourselves with such severe though necessary reprehension on a writer of our own country, we are glad to seize an excuse for holding up another countrywoman in the light she deserves as one who has really raised the character of her country by her writings. Thus showing that though we "blame when we must," we "approve whene'er we can." In our reviewing department we have been accused of severity and injustice; of the former we have only to regret that so many occasions have been given us for exercising that unlovely duty; of the latter, we refer our papers to the candid and unprejudiced, confident that they will be found conformable with the principle on which the review has been commenced, and on which we are determined to proceed, to give merit its due, and place it in the most favourable light, but when ignorance or folly begins to babble, boldly to employ the scourge, and lash it into sense or silence.

This novel, if it should be classed in a species of writings which it resembles only in being founded on fiction, exhibits the simple story of a virtuous woman, who, profiting by the benefits of a religious education, has risen from the lowest rank of society to a situation of independence and comparative affluence, and endeavours to make the best and most acceptable return to the being from whom she received these blessings, by making herself as useful to her fellow-creatures as her means will admit. She is represented as retiring to spend the evening of her life in a retired village in Scotland, not in indolence or self-occupation, but in the active exertions of her abilities in benefiting those around her; not in teaching, and leaving them to practice; but in enforcing by example as she instils by her words those virtues which are valuable in all ranks, but essentially necessary to the poor, that is, to the great mass of mankind.

The principal vice against which the censure of our author is directed, is indolence, which she clearly proves,

by a well conducted inference, from circumstances ingeniously and simply wrought together, to be the parent of many others much greater. She begins by a general outline of the village, but, as Sterne observes, finding herself lost and bewildered in the multitude of objects, she selects a single groupe, and fixing the reader's attention on a single family, in their artless talk, clearly proves the induction just now stated.

The village of Glenburnie is thus described.

"At length the village appeared in view. It consisted of about twenty or thirty thatched cottages, which, but for their chimneys, and the smoke that issued from them, might have passed for so many stables or hogsties, so little had they to distinguish them as the abodes of man. That one horse, at least, was the inhabitant of every dwelling, there was no room to doubt, as every door could not only boast its dunghill, but had a small cart stuck up on end directly before it; which cart, though often broken, and always dirty, seemed ostentatiously displayed as a proof of wealth.

"In the middle of the village stood the kirk, an humble edifice, which meekly raised its head but a few degrees above the neighbouring houses. It was, however, graced by an ornament of peculiar beauty. Two fine old ash trees, which grew at the east end, spread their protecting arms over its lowly roof; and served all the uses of a steeple and a belfry; for on one of the loftiest of these branches was the bell suspended, which, on each returning Sabbath,

"Rang the blest summons to the house
"of God."

"On the other side of the church-yard stood the Manse, distinguished from the other houses in the village, by a sash-window on each side of the door, and garret windows above; which shows that two floors were, or might be inhabited; for in truth the house had such a sombre air, that Mrs. Mason, in passing, concluded it to be deserted."

The farmer's house and garden is then picturesquely described.

"It must be confessed, that the aspect of the dwelling, where she was to

six her residence, was by no means inviting. The walls were substantial, built, like the houses in the village, of stone and lime; but they were blackened by the mud which the cart-wheels had spattered from the ruts in winter; and on one side of the door, completely covered from view by the contents of a great dunghill. On the other, and directly under the window, was a squashy pool, formed by the dirty water thrown from the house, and in it about twenty young ducks were at this time dabbling.

"At the threshold of the door, room had been left for a paving-stone, but it had never been laid; and consequently the place became too low, to the great advantage of the younger ducklings, who always found in it a plentiful supply of water, in which they could swim without danger. Happily Mr. Stewart was provided with boots, so that he could take a firm step in it, while he lifted Mrs. Mason, and set her down in safety within the threshold. But there an unforeseen danger awaited her, for the great whey pot had stood since morning, when the cheese had been made; and was at the present moment filled with chickens, who were busily picking at the bits of curd which had hardened on the sides, and cruelly mocked their wishes. Over this Mr. Stewart and Mrs. Mason unfortunately stumbled. The pot was overturned, and the chickens cackling with hideous din, flew about in all directions, some over their heads, and others making their way by the pallin (or inner door) into the house.

"The accident was attended with no farther bad consequences than a little hurt upon the shins: and all our party were now assembled in the kitchen; but though they found the doors of the house open, they saw no appearance of any inhabitants.

"By the help of Miss Mary's arm, Mrs. Mason got out into the open air, and gladly assented to her friend's proposal of taking a view of the garden, which lay at the back of the house. On going to the wicket by which it entered, they found it broken, so that they were obliged to wait until the stake which propped it was removed: nor was this the only difficulty

they had to encounter; the path, which was very narrow, was damp, by sippings from the dirty pool; and on each side of it, the ground immediately rose, and the docks and nettles which covered it, consequently grew so high, that they had no alternative but to walk sideways, or to separate.

"Ye'll see a bouny garden if ye gang on," said Mrs. MacClarty; "my son's unco proud o't."

"I wonder your son can let these weeds grow here so rank," said Miss Mary; "I think, if he is proud of the garden, he should take some pains to make the entrance to it passable?"

"O, it does weel eneugh for us," returned the contented mother. "But saw ye ever sic fine southern wood & or sic a bell o' thyme? we have twa rose busies down yonder too, but we canna get at them for the nettles. My son gets to them by speeling the wa', but he wold do any thing for flowers. His father's often angry at the time he spends on them."

"Your husband then has not much taste for the garden, I suppose," said Mrs. Mason; "and indeed so it appears, for here is ground enough to supply a large family with fruit and vegetables all the year round; but I see scarcely any thing but cabbages and weeds."

"Na, na, we have some leeks too," said Mrs. MacClarty, "and green kail in winter in plenty. We dinna pretend to kickshaws; green kail's gude eneugh for us."

"But," said Miss Mary, "any one may pretend to what they can produce by their own labour. Were your children to dress and weed this garden, there might be a pretty walk; there, you might have a plot of green pease, there, another of beans, and under your window you might have a nice border of flowers to regale you with their sweet smell. They might do this too at very little trouble."

"Ay, but they canna be fashed," said Mrs. MacClarty; "and it does just weel eneugh."

The inhabitants are such as may be expected in such a dwelling, the parents not devoid either of sense or industry, but incapable through indolence of giving these qualities their

proper direction. The children idle, sullen, and self-willed. Mrs. Mason, after many vain endeavours to overcome their obstinacy, is at length forced to quit the family, and removes to a neighbouring cottage, which though poor, contains in it the germ of improvement. Here she begins to execute a plan that had suggested itself to her on her first arrival, of increasing the happiness of the whole village, by reforming their habits. Seconded by the village pastor and her hosts, she proceeds with success because she acts with system and moderation. The old fashioned prejudices are at length eradicated, and we are presented towards the conclusion with the following pleasing prospect of the village in its state of improvement.

"This striking indication of a change of sentiment in the most sturdy stickler for the *gude and gaits*, foreboded the improvements that were speedily to take place in the village of Glenburnie. These had their origin in the spirit of emulation excited among the elder school-boys, for the external appearance of their respective homes. The girls exerted themselves with no less activity, to effect a reformation within doors; and so successful were they in their respective operations, that by the time the Earl of Longlands came to take possession of Hill Castle, when he, accompanied by his two sisters, came to visit Mrs. Mason at Glenburnie, the village presented such a picture of neatness and comfort, as excelled all that in the course of their travels they had seen. The carts which used formerly to be stuck up on end before every door, were now placed in wattled sheds attached to the gable end of the dwelling, and which were rendered ornamental from their coverings of honey-suckle or ivy. The bright and clear glass of the windows, was seen to advantage peeping through the foliage of the rose trees, and other flowering shrubs that were trimly nailed against the walls. The gardens on the other side were kept with equal care. There the pot-herb flourished. There the goodly rows of bee-hives evinced the additional nourishment afforded their inhabitants, and showed that the

flowers were of other use besides regaling the sight or smell.

" Mrs. Mason, at the request of her noble benefactress, conducted them into several of the cottages, where, merely from the attention paid to neatness, all had the air of cheerfulness and contentment. She was no less pleased than were the cottagers at the expressions of approbation which were liberally bestowed by her admiring friends; who particularly noticed the dress of the young women, which, equally removed from the slovenliness in which so many indulge on the working days, as from the absurd and preposterous attempt at fashion, which is on Sundays so generally assumed, was remarkable for neatness and simplicity. Great as was Mrs. Mason's attachment to the family of Longlands, she would not consent to relinquish her employment, and go to reside at Castle hill, as they proposed she should immediately do. She continued for some years to give her assistance to Morrison in conducting the school, which was now increased by scholars from all parts of the country; and was amply repaid for her kindness by the undeviating gratitude of the worthy couple, from whom she experienced a constant increase of friendship and affection.

" The happy effects of their joint efforts in improving the hearts and dispositions of the youth of both sexes, and in confirming them in habits of industry and virtue, were so fully displayed, as to afford the greatest satisfaction to their instructors. To have been educated at the school of Glenburnie was considered as an ample recommendation to a servant, and implied a security for truth, diligence, and honesty. And fortunate was the lad pronounced, whose bride could boast of Mrs. Mason's favour and approbation; for never did these fail to be followed by a conduct, that insured happiness and prosperity."

Should any one wish to know how this extraordinary reform was accomplished, we refer him to the book itself, conscious that the extracts we could make would convey but a faint idea of its merits, and deprive the inquirer of no small degree of rational pleasure.

But it is not by instilling habits of cleanliness and industry in the lower orders, that this book may be useful. It shows that any person, however humble his original station, may rise to respectability and independence, by the practice of those virtues, the exercise of which is within every body's reach. Mrs. Mason, contrary to the established rule in all novels, is nowhere described as possessing any extraordinary qualifications. We are not told of her age, her size, looks, colour of her hair, or any circumstance to excite our interest. If we may guess from the effects excited on her first appearance, they appear to be rather unfavourable; yet there are few who when they have closed this little memoir, do not wish to be better acquainted with her. We wish she had taken a trip to Ireland: here she would have found much to improve, and much inclination for improvement. Perhaps her native country may yet be the subject of this amiable author's speculations. Till that time we would intimate to her the idea of rendering the present performance more generally known in the classes where alone it can be useful, by reducing it to the capacity of their purses. It would be unjust to propose what might diminish the well-merited profits of this work; but when the public curiosity is fully gratified by it in its present shape, we would strongly recommend the publication of a cheap edition for this special purpose. The rich frequently wish to better the condition of the lower classes, but they seldom undertake the affair the right way. They either stop short too soon, or go too far; and their advances are too often met with suspicious caution. We do not pretend to investigate the causes of this at present; but shall conclude with the observation, founded on long experience, that as vice has always a progressive increase downwards, from the rich to the poor, so every improvement in the morals of the people has taken the contrary direction, originating with the poorer, and gradually extending upwards, until it caught the higher classes, and forced them by an irresistible impulse to yield to the general current.